



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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ADMITTED BANGLADESHI HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSER LEAVES U.S.

Valley restaurant owner admitted torturing villagers to sway outcome of Bangladeshi elections

LOS ANGELES – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced today that a former second lieutenant in the Bangladeshi army who admitted torturing villagers to force them into voting for certain candidates in that country's elections has left the United States.

ICE officials say Sazzad Ahmed Bipu, 35, who until recently lived in Stevenson Ranch, departed Los Angeles early this morning on board a commercial flight, capping a nearly decade-long legal battle by ICE to gain his removal.

During his immigration proceedings, which began in 1996, Bipu testified that as a Bangladeshi army officer he was ordered to intimidate local villagers into voting for candidates with the Bangladeshi National Party. Bipu admitted torturing villagers himself at least once and testified that he stood by and watched while his troops tortured villagers on several other occasions.

In 1999, an immigration judge found that Bipu was not eligible for immigration benefits and instructed him to voluntarily depart the United States. The Northridge restaurant owner challenged the ruling, taking his case to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

ICE took Bipu into custody in May after the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed his case. Subsequently, the Ninth Circuit denied Bipu's request for an emergency stay of removal. Recognizing that his deportation was imminent, Bipu left the country voluntarily earlier today.

"Our attorneys put countless hours into this case and they did an outstanding job," said ICE Los Angeles chief counsel John Salter. "We will not stand by and allow the United States to become a haven for those who have committed crimes against humanity."

Identifying and removing human rights abusers like Bipu is one of ICE's top enforcement priorities. As a result of this commitment, ICE's caseload involving human rights violators has grown by approximately 50 percent in the past two years.

Current research by several non-governmental organizations suggests that there may be as many as 1,100 suspected human rights violators living in the United States. Many of these individuals have come here in an effort to evade prosecution for the crimes they have committed in their home countries. ICE has identified more than 200 active cases from more than 50 countries involving suspected human rights violators. These cases are vigorously being investigated and prosecuted.

ICE